

### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PREDICTED FOR THE PROJECT APE

#### 3.1 Prehistoric

The following is a summary of previously identified prehistoric period archaeological sites in the general vicinity of the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE, and a discussion of the potential for the project APE to contain prehistoric period archaeological sites. According to the predictive modeling accomplished by Custer (n.d.) for prehistoric period archaeological resources in Delaware, the project APE is contained within moderate and low probability areas. More specifically, Table 1 (after Custer 1987:60) indicates that the probability for finding significant sites within the Little Assawoman Bay area for each of the prehistoric period site types is medium to high, while the existing data quality is only poor to fair, making the Little Assawoman Bay area a high priority for intensive investigation (Custer 1987:58).

**Table 1.**  
**Site Probabilities and Data Quality for the Little Assawoman Bay Management Area**  
**(after Custer 1987)**

Site Type	Probability for Sites	Existing Data Quality
Paleoindian Period		
Base Camp	medium	poor
Base Camp Maintenance Station	medium	poor
Procurement	medium	poor
Archaic Period		
Macro-band Base Camp	medium	poor
Micro-band Base Camp	medium	poor
Procurement	medium	poor
Woodland I Period		
Macro-band Base Camp	high	fair
Micro-band Base Camp	high	fair
Procurement	high	poor to fair

**Table 1.**  
**Site Probabilities and Data Quality for the Little Assawoman Bay Management Area**  
**(after Custer 1987)**  
**(Continued)**

Site Type	Probability for Sites	Existing Data Quality
Woodland II Period		
Macro-band Base Camp	high	poor to fair
Micro-band Base Camp	high	fair
Procurement	high	poor to fair
Contact Period		
General	high	poor

In 1986, Custer (1986:196) identified 26 previously recorded archaeological sites within County Block K, where the project APE is located, and a total of 327 sites in Sussex County. Review of the Delaware archaeological site files did not yield any previously recorded prehistoric period archaeological sites within or adjacent to the project APE. Reviews of several previously completed cultural resource management project reports, pertinent to the area, also indicate that no prehistoric period archaeological sites have been identified within the vicinity of the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE. A planning study (Catts *et al.* 1992:65-68), which included both the S.R. 26 and S.R. 54 corridors, lists no previously recorded Paleoindian, Archaic, or Contact period sites in the study area; however, five previously recorded Woodland I and two Woodland I and II period sites are listed. In addition Catts *et al.* (1992:65) identified four previously recorded sites of unknown chronological affiliation in their study area.

Previous archaeological research completed in the Atlantic Coastal Region in proximity to the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE includes numerous surveys (e.g., Clark 1993; Clark and Scholl 1994; Crist 1998; Custer 1987; Custer and Mellin 1987, 1990, 1991; Otter 2000) whose results appear to support the idea that this area of Delaware experienced low-density prehistoric settlement, but some of the most productive environmental conditions for prehistoric subsistence (Catts *et al.* 1992:15). Portions of the current S.R. 54 Improvements project APE (Test Areas A, B, G, H, P, and Q) have been previously surveyed during cultural resources work completed for the Americana Bayside development, and are reported in draft form (Otter 2000). Otter (2000) did not

identify any prehistoric period archaeological sites within the current S.R. 54 Improvements project APE.

Based on the absence of previously identified prehistoric period archaeological sites in the general vicinity of the project APE, the lack of specific known Native American villages or trails in the project APE, the nature of the project APE along an existing transportation and utilities corridor, and the constricted areal size of the test areas, the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE is considered to have a low to moderate probability to contain prehistoric period archaeological sites.

The presence of both well drained soils of appropriate age to contain archaeological resources, as well as the presence of less attractive poorly drained soils within the project APE, also supports a determination of moderate probability to contain prehistoric period archaeological remains. The following statements by Catts *et al.* (1992:13-15) support the idea that parts of the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE may have been attractive for prehistoric peoples.

The Mid-Drainage/Inland Bay Zone (Figure 7-Zone II) consists of the headlands and adjacent areas bordering Rehoboth Bay, Indian River Bay, the lower reaches of Indian River, and Little Assawoman Bay. The Atlantic Coast barrier island complex is also included in this zone. Extensive salt marshes characterized this area for the later portions of the Holocene and these environments were very productive for hunters and gatherers. During the middle and early Holocene this zone would have included the main stems of the major drainages (Figures [sic] 6). The Oligohaline transition zone between fresh and salt water was included in this zone during the early Holocene and some fringing marshes would have probably been present during the middle Holocene. As such, through all time periods the Mid-Drainage/Inland Bay zone is the most productive within the Atlantic Coast region.

For a complete and detailed prehistoric period context of the project area, the reader is referred to *A Management Plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Cultural Resources* (Custer 1986), *A Management Plan for the Prehistoric Archaeological Resources of Delaware's Atlantic Coastal Region* (Custer 1987), *Delaware Prehistoric Archaeology, An Ecological Approach* (Custer 1984), and *Chesapeake Prehistory* (Dent 1995).

### **3.2 Historic**

The following is a summary of previously identified historic period archaeological sites in the general vicinity of the S.R 54 Improvements project APE, and a discussion of the potential for the

project APE to contain historic period archaeological sites. For an extensive description of Delaware's Euro-American history, the reader is referred to the *Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources* (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). De Cunzo and Catts (1990:109-110, 112) list 79 previously identified historic period archaeological sites within Sussex County, including 18 in Courty Block K. Of these 79 sites, most (85%) are related to agricultural activities, while seven percent are maritime related, one-and-one-half percent each are industrial or public religious, and five percent are other types of sites.

Based on several predictive models used to reconstruct historic settlement patterns in an area surrounding the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE, Catts *et al.* (1992:110) have determined that historic period sites dating from A.D. 1630 to A.D. 1730 are possible within the project APE. For the period from A.D. 1730 to A.D. 1940, there is a medium to low probability that historic period sites will be present in most of the project APE (Catts *et al.* 1992:115,118,123, 126). The project APE does not fall within the high probability areas delineated by Catts *et al.* (1992) due to the rural nature of its historic land-use development outside of urban centers.

Review of the Delaware archaeological site files did not yield any previously recorded historic period archaeological sites within the project APE; however, numerous historic period archaeological sites have been recorded in the Americana Bayside development area (Otter 2000), which is proximal to the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE. Based on the sketch mapping provided in the report, that does not include landmarks or other spatially orienting features, it is difficult to determine exactly where the identified sites are located. Two sites identified by Otter (2000), 7S-K-109 and 7S-K-110, may be located adjacent to the current S.R. 54 Improvements project APE; however, their exact geographical/spatial relationship to the project APE is unclear. Site 7S-K-109 appears to represent a twentieth century dump or barn location, while Site 7S-K-110 appears to represent a nineteenth or twentieth century farmstead/residence. The draft report (Otter 2000) recommended Phase II research for both sites. Additional Phase II research has been or is being completed on several of the historic period archaeological sites located in the Americana Bayside development area (Thomas 2002; Dan Griffith, personal communication 2003).

The majority of the remaining sites identified by Otter (2000) are small artifact scatters or isolates comprised of ceramics, glass, metal, and other materials. The sites in this development area appear to be related to the relatively dense rural occupation of this area, as demonstrated on the Beers (1868) map. Numerous private homeowners/landowners are listed on the Beers (1868) map; however, no commercial, industrial, or public establishments are listed (e.g., mills, stores,

schools) for the project APE vicinity (Beers 1868). Historic maps also indicate that the route of S.R. 54 has not changed appreciably throughout the historic period, but that development immediately adjacent to the roadway has increased (Beers 1868; Delaware State Highway Department 1941; War Department, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army 1946, 1948).

During the winter of 2002/2003, a historic structures survey was completed for the S.R. 54 Improvements project (McCormick Taylor and Associates, Inc. 2003). During this structures survey, four of the 28 properties within the project area were recommended potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP. The four properties recommended eligible include the Sound United Methodist Church (S-2066), the Gray Property (S-2086), the Campbell Property (S-2097), and the Adkins Property (S-2099, S-2100). All four of these historic properties are recommended eligible under Criteria A and/or C.

Based on the absence of previously identified historic period archaeological sites located within the project APE, the presence of several potentially NRHP-eligible properties adjacent to the project APE, the indications that this area has been inhabited by Euro-Americans since A.D. 1630 (DeCunzo and Catts 1990:172), and the indication from historic maps and oral interviews that different and/or additional historic structures may have been present adjacent to the project APE, the S.R. 54 Improvements project APE has a moderate to high probability to contain historic period archaeological resources. Due to the long-term rural nature of the project APE, and based on the numbers of different types of previously identified historic period archaeological sites located within Sussex County, if historic period archaeological sites are identified in the project APE they will likely be related to rural agricultural and/or domestic activities. However, given the constricted size and positioning of the project APE, it is unlikely that generalized historic artifact scatters or isolates will contribute significant information to the land-use history of the project APE.